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Meadowlarks In Lincoln County

By Doris B. Gates

A study of the relative distribution of Eastern and Western Meadowlarks is being conducted by Wesley E. Lanyon* at the University of Wisconsin. He plans to make use of data collected by cooperators in various sections of the United States, particularly the western edge of the Eastern Meadowlark range. This report deals with the Meadowlarks of Lincoln County, Nebraska.

The study was carried on by listening for one minute for the number of singing males at mile corners. Therefore, areas within the county were selected according to the placement of roads. Of eight Survey Areas selected, six were used and one additional was chosen by the cooperator. Stations or listening points varied from 33 to 48, an average of 39.43 Stations per Survey Area.

The following data were collected at each Station: survey number, date, time, temperature, wind condition, weather (degree of cloudiness), station number, number of Eastern Meadowlarks, number of Western Meadowlarks, and land cover. The count began at daylight, or as soon as one could drive safely without lights. This varied from 6:00 A.M. April 3 to 5:05 A.M. May 16. The latest finishing time was 9:10. The wind varied from calm to quite strong, and the weather varied from clear to partly cloudy. No rain fell during the counting. Land cover varied from large wheat fields or stubble to great pastures with some small areas at the corners having farm homes with the usual buildings and plantings of trees, mostly Chinese elms.

The cooperator stood at the rear of the car and counted the number of singing birds according to direction and loudness of the song. Usually each bird would sing from one to four or five times within the one minute allotted to each station.

In 276 Stations 1160 Meadowlarks were counted of which 45 were Eastern Meadowlarks and 1115 were Western. There was an average of 4.20 Meadowlarks per Station of which 4.04 were Westerns and .16 were Easterns. Over 20 hours of actual time was spent at the Stations and traveling between them, and approximately 640 miles, including going to and from the Stations, were covered.

Since the Survey areas were necessarily selected because of availability rather than habitat, resulting figures probably do not give the true picture. There is no doubt that Western Meadowlarks are much more numerous than Eastern Meadowlarks. The Survey Areas were nearly all in the uplands which were either flat or gently rolling sand or clay hills. They were not lowlands, land adjacent to streams or rivers, except one which was laid out between the North and South Platte Rivers. This area has many dwellings, and Highway 30 runs nearly down the center. When this area was covered (Easter morning), there was much interference from truck traffic, tractors and airplanes.

The Survey Area selected by the cooperator extended west along the north side of the North Platte River and east along the south side of the South Platte River. It was longitudinal rather than square. All other areas included only a

*Mr. Lanyon would like more cooperators. Anyone wishing further information, may write to him at the Department of Zoology, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.

few lowland Stations or none. The ratio in the square Survey Area where the most Eastern Meadowlarks were found was 9 to 166, the next highest was 4 to 151, while in the Survey Area along the rivers the ratio was 32 to 144. In one Survey Area that had very little lowland there were no Eastern Meadowlarks but after the count was completed, the cooperator followed the wide wet meadow along Red Willow Creek a distance of more than four miles and heard Eastern Meadowlarks each time she listened.

According to the data collected for this report, and the observations of the cooperator, Eastern Meadowlarks occur in Lincoln County in considerable numbers but in significantly lower number than the Western Meadowlarks. The Western form is found in drier uplands, while both forms are found in lowlands or the floodplains of the river and stream valleys. The extent of cultivation or pasture and wild hay lands does not seem to be a determining factor since both conditions exist in both the uplands and lowlands.

I wish to acknowledge the help and assistance given me in collecting this data by Miss Rebecca Tout and Mrs. Irene McDonald. North Platte, Nebraska.

The Status of the Western Turkey Vulture in Nebraska

by William F. Rapp, Jr.

Previous to 1933, the vulture commonly seen in Nebraska was called the Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura septentrionalis*). In that year Dr. Herbert Friedman of the United States National Museum separated the Turkey Vulture into two subspecies, the Eastern Turkey Vulture (*C. a. septentrionalis*) and the Western Turkey Vulture (*C. a. teter*). The difference between these two subspecies is mainly size, the western being smaller than the eastern bird. It is impossible to tell the two subspecies apart in the field and in areas of intergradation the only acceptable name which can be used in field identification is Turkey Vulture. Friedmann (1950:45) gives the range of the Western Turkey Vulture as follows: "Austral zones from southern British Columbia, central Alberta, Saskatchewan, southern Manitoba, western Ontario, Wisconsin, and northern Minnesota south to southern Baja, California, northern Mexico, . . . east to eastern Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, the Dakotas, Minnesota and southeastern Michigan. Winters from Vancouver Island and California to Nebraska and southward." All Turkey Vultures seen in Nebraska are, therefore, referred to the western subspecies.

The written record indicates that at one time the Western Turkey Vulture was far more abundant in Nebraska than it is at the present time. In 1896 Lawrence Bruner (1896:85) gave the following reports on this bird: "Omaha, West Point, Dismal River—breeding, Crawford, Lincoln (L. Brunner; 'Summer resident, common, arrive in April and leave in September' (Taylor); Omaha—breeds (L. Skow); Peru, breeds—common (Coleman); Cherry county—breeds (J. M. Bates); Gage County (F. A. Colby)." By 1904, Brunner, Wolcott, and Swenk (1904:48) considered the Western Turkey Vulture: "A moderately common bird during spring, summer and fall." They also felt that the bird nested throughout the state in suitable localities.

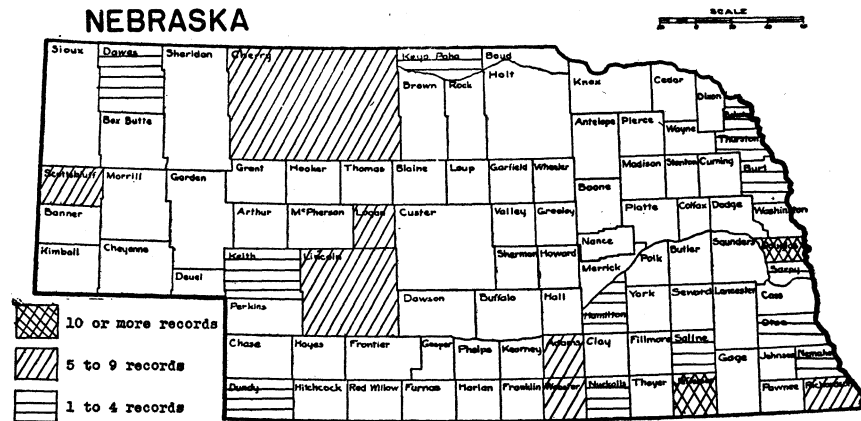


Fig. 1. Distribution of Western Turkey Vulture in Nebraska

Haecker, Moser, and Swenk (1945:8) state that the Western Turkey Vulture is: "An uncommon to rare summer resident and breeder throughout the State." Thus, one can readily see that as the population of Nebraska has increased the population of the Western Turkey Vulture has decreased. It is interesting to note that Roberts (1936:295) states that in Minnesota the bird was formerly more common than it is at the present time.

Since 1932 there have been published in *The Nebraska Bird Review* at least thirty records of the Western Turkey Vulture in Nebraska. Many of these records are for more than one bird, so the author feels that it is safe to say that at least 50 vultures have been seen in Nebraska in the last 22 years by competent observers. In addition, the author in his travels about the state has seen vultures on many occasions. Figure 1 is a map showing the distribution of the Western Turkey Vulture in Nebraska based upon published records and the author's personal observations. A careful study of this map will reveal several important facts: first, the largest number of records are from Jefferson and Douglas Counties—these counties have had or do have at the present time large numbers of active field ornithologists; and, second, that the bird has been reported throughout the Missouri River Valley of Nebraska. This last statement indicates that the Western Turkey Vulture follows the Missouri River on its migration flights both in the spring and fall. One can also assume that although the majority of Vultures favor the Missouri Valley as a migration route, they are not dependent upon it and can successfully cross Nebraska at any point. The bird student is cautioned to remember that lack of records does not mean that the Western Turkey Vulture does not occur in that area of the state. Instead it indicates that there has not been sufficient field work in that area.

The early ornithologists in Nebraska all reported that the Turkey Vulture nested in suitable areas in the state. Unfortunately, very few positive breeding records for this species in Nebraska are known. In 1944 Mrs. Earle L. Lionberger (1944:41) reported the nesting of the Western Turkey Vulture in the southern part of Nuckolls County. This is the only known recent nesting record for this species in Nebraska.

After having carefully studied the published records for the Western Turkey Vulture in Nebraska, observed the species in the field in various sections of the state, and read the published comments of ornithologists in other states, the author feels that the bird is on the increase in Nebraska. This statement can only be proved by field work throughout the state, but if careful records are kept of all vultures seen, the author feels that it will prove that the vulture is more common than the written record indicates.

In other sections of the country the Turkey Vulture is becoming more common. Bagg and Parker (1951:315) in their study of the Turkey Vulture in New England state that in 1927 Forbush (1927:89) described the Eastern Turkey Vulture as "occasional" in New England and by the 1940's the bird was appearing regularly in parts of Connecticut and Massachusetts. The same authors quote Dr. J. Van Tyne as stating that "the species has increased from a rare one to a common one in the Ann Arbor region."

The author would deeply appreciate receiving records of the Western Turkey Vulture from any section of Nebraska.

Summary

In the early days of ornithology the Turkey Vulture was considered to be a fairly common bird in Nebraska. From the 1900's until the 1930's the bird seemed to be declining in numbers. At the present time the bird seems to be increasing in numbers. The vast majority of Nebraska records are from the Missouri Valley indicating that the bird uses the river as a fly-way. The bird is assumed to breed in Nebraska, but there are very few records to support the statement.

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Fall Field Day 1953

The third annual fall field day of the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union was held on the first weekend of October (3 and 4).

Table I is a three year summary of the fall field days:

Year	Number of Groups	Number of Species
1951	11	102
1952	5	102
1953	5	107

The following groups participated:

Lincoln: Audubon Naturalists' Club.

North Platte: North Platte Bird Club

Omaha: R. G. Cortelyou, Miss M. Ellsworth, L. O. Horsky, H. Smith, and J. H. Smith

Plattsmouth: L. Heineman, reporter.

Scottsbluff: Nature Lovers Club.

GREBES

HORNED GREBE, Lincoln. PIED-BILLED GREBE, Lincoln; Omaha (400).

HERONS AND BITTERNS

GREAT BLUE HERON, Lincoln; North Platte (3); Scottsbluff (2).

EASTERN GREEN HERON, Lincoln. AMERICAN BITTERN, Omaha (1).

DUCKS

COMMON MALLARD, North Platte (12); Scottsbluff (8). AMERICAN PINTAIL, Omaha (1). BLUE-WINGED TEAL, Lincoln; Omaha (27); Scottsbluff (5). CINNAMON TEAL, Scottsbluff (11). REDHEAD, North Platte (26). RUDDY DUCK, Scottsbluff (5).

BIRDS OF PREY

RED-TAILED HAWK, North Platte (3); Omaha (8); Scottsbluff (1).

BROAD-WINGED HAWK, Plattsmouth (2). AMERICAN ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK, Omaha (7), MARSH HAWK, Lincoln; Scottsbluff (8); OSPREY, Omaha (2). PIGEON HAWK, Scottsbluff (1). SPARROW HAWK, North Platte (3); Scottsbluff (5).

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS

PRAIRIE SHARP-TAILED GROUSE, Scottsbluff (2). PHEASANT, Lincoln; North Platte (5); Scottsbluff (9).

RAILS

VIRGINIA RAIL, Omaha (1). COOT, Omaha (15); Scottsbluff (2).

GULLS AND TERNS

KILLDEER, Lincoln; North Platte (23); Omaha (2); Scottsbluff (81). LEAST SANDPIPER, Lincoln. DOWITCHER, North Platte (3). HERRING GULL, North Platte (50). RING-BILLED GULL, North Platte (5). FRANKLIN'S GULL, Omaha (150); Scottsbluff (335).

DOVES

MOURNING DOVE, Lincoln; North Platte (4); Omaha (10); Plattsmouth (6); Scottsbluff (24).

OWLS

SCREECH OWL, Omaha (1). HORNED OWL, Scottsbluff (1).

SWIFTS AND HUMMINGBIRDS

CHIMNEY SWIFT, Lincoln; Omaha (5); Plattsmouth (20). RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD, Plattsmouth (1).

KINGFISHERS

BELTED KINGFISHER, North Platte (2); Omaha (3); Scottsbluff (2).

WOODPECKERS

YELLOW-SHAFTED FLICKER, Lincoln; Omaha (5); Plattsmouth (9); Scottsbluff (3). RED-SHAFTED FLICKER, Lincoln; North Platte (7); Scottsbluff (19). RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER, Lincoln; Omaha (1); Plattsmouth (6). YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER, Lincoln. RED-NAPED SAPSUCKER, Scottsbluff (1). HAIRY WOODPECKER, Plattsmouth (6); Scottsbluff (1). DOWNY WOODPECKER, Lincoln; Omaha (2); Plattsmouth (10); Scottsbluff (5).

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS

WESTERN KINGBIRD, Omaha (1). EASTERN PHOEBE, Lincoln. LEAST FLYCATCHER, Lincoln.

LARKS

HORNED LARK, Lincoln; Scottsbluff (20).

SWALLOWS

BARN SWALLOW, Lincoln; Omaha (6); Scottsbluff (13). CLIFF SWALLOW, Scottsbluff (10).

JAYS, MAGPIES AND CROWS

BLUE JAY, Lincoln; North Platte (1); Omaha (15); Plattsmouth (15); Scottsbluff (1). MAGPIE, North Platte (20); Scottsbluff (29). CROW, Lincoln; North Platte (3); Omaha (1); Plattsmouth (7); Scottsbluff (12).

TITMICE AND CHICKADEES

CHICKADEE, Lincoln; North Platte (9); Omaha (15); Plattsmouth (15); Scottsbluff (17). TUFTED TITMOUSE, Lincoln; Omaha (1); Plattsmouth (3).

NUTHATCHES

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH, Lincoln; Omaha (2); Plattsmouth (3). RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH, Scottsbluff (3).

WRENS

HOUSE WREN, Lincoln; Plattsmouth (2). CAROLINA WREN, Plattsmouth (1). PRAIRIE MARSH WREN, Omaha (2). SHORT-BILLED MARSH WREN, COMMON ROCK WREN, Scottsbluff (1).

MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS

CATBIRD, Plattsmouth (1). BROWN THRASHER, North Platte (1).

THRUSHES, BLUEBIRDS AND SOLITAIRES

ROBIN, Lincoln; North Platte (11); Omaha (25); Plattsmouth (150); Scottsbluff (70). BLUEBIRD, Lincoln; Plattsmouth (6). MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD, North Platte (3); Scottsbluff (15). TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE, Scottsbluff (50).

KINGLETS

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET, Plattsmouth (3); Scottsbluff (2).

PIPITS

AMERICAN PIPIT, North Platte (3).

WAXWINGS

CEDAR WAXWING, Lincoln.

STARLINGS

STARLING, Lincoln; North Platte (15); Omaha (500); Plattsmouth (2); Scottsbluff (9).

VIREOS

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO, Lincoln. WARBLING VIREO, Omaha (1).

WOOD WARBLERS

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER, Lincoln. NASHVILLE WARBLER, Lincoln. MYRTLE WARBLER, Lincoln; Plattsmouth (23); Scottsbluff (2). AUDUBON'S WARBLER, Scottsbluff (6). LOUISIANA WATER-THRUSH, Lincoln. MOURNING WARBLER, Lincoln. WILSON'S WARBLER, Scottsbluff (2).

WEAVER FINCHES

ENGLISH SPARROW, Lincoln; North Platte (8); Omaha (100); Plattsmouth (50); Scottsbluff (57).

MEADOWLARKS AND BLACKBIRDS

MEADOWLARK, North Platte (22); Scottsbluff (100). EASTERN MEADOWLARK, Lincoln. WESTERN MEADOWLARK, Lincoln. RED-WING, Lincoln; North Platte (1000); Omaha (500); Plattsmouth (30); Scottsbluff (3000). RUSTY BLACKBIRD, Lincoln. BREWER'S BLACKBIRD, Lincoln; Scottsbluff (50). BRONZED GRACKLE, Lincoln; North Platte (100); Omaha (8); Plattsmouth (100); Scottsbluff (1000). COWBIRD, North Platte (3); Omaha (25); Scottsbluff (12).

GROSBEAKS, FINCHES, AND SPARROWS

CARDINAL, Lincoln; North Platte (1); Omaha (6); Plattsmouth (8). PINE GROSBEAK, Scottsbluff (100). PINE SISKIN, Plattsmouth (4). GOLD-FINCH, Lincoln; North Platte (16); Omaha (35); Plattsmouth (15). RED CROSSBILL, Scottsbluff (25). RED-EYED TOWHEE, Lincoln. ARCTIC TOWHEE, Lincoln; North Platte (1); Scottsbluff (1). VESPER SPARROW, Lincoln; North Platte (24); Scottsbluff (14). LARK SPARROW, Scottsbluff (12). SLATE-COLORED JUNCO, Lincoln; Omaha (1); Scottsbluff (2). PINK-SIDED JUNCO, Scottsbluff (46). TREE SPARROW, Lincoln; North Platte (16). CHIPPING SPARROW, Lincoln; Omaha (20); Scottsbluff (25). CLAY-COLORED SPARROW, Lincoln. FIELD SPARROW, Plattsmouth (1). HARRIS' SPARROW, Lincoln. WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW, North Platte (1); Scottsbluff (66). WHITE-THROATED SPARROW, Scottsbluff (1). LINCOLN'S SPARROW, Plattsmouth (1). SONG SPARROW, Lincoln.

The Fifty-Third Annual Meeting

This year the Annual Meeting will be held at Valentine, Nebraska, May 21-22. Miss Doris B. Gates is in charge of local arrangements. The headquarters will be the Marion Hotel. This is the first time that the N.O.U. has met in Valentine and it will give us an opportunity to visit both the Fort Niobrara Game Refuge and the Valentine Waterfowl Refuge. Mrs. Retha Shamis, Marion Hotel, will take care of reservations for both the hotels and the motels. Additional information concerning both the meeting and accommodations will be sent to each member at a later date.

Obituary -- Mrs. A. H. Jones

Mrs. R. R. Damerell

In the death of Mrs. A. H. Jones of Hastings November 15, 1953, the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union lost one of its best known members.

Elected to the organization in 1924, she had served it in many capacities and rarely allowed anything to prevent her attendance at annual meetings. She was president of the Union in 1929 and recording secretary from 1940 to 1945.

Consistently a very careful observer of birds, she had come to be recognized as an authority when any question of identification of species or subspecies arose. Her interest in birds had inspired many friends to take up their study, and it was regarded as a distinct privilege to be included in a group with her on a birding trip.

She was often in the field daily during the migration seasons, and for 28 years had sent in the annual cooperative spring migration report from her home community to the Nebraska Bird Review. In addition she reported regularly on all the birds listed by fellow members of the Brooking Bird Club of Hastings of which she was a charter member. The club was organized in 1922 by the late A. M. Brooking, whose name it bears. Mrs. Jones served it as president in 1925-26, and again in 1943-44 and in 1949-50.

In later years, Mr. and Mrs. Jones travelled widely and her home club as well as the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union were richer for those trips, since she always came back with delightful and authentic reports on the birds and their habitats she had seen.

Her name appears on practically all of the programs for the Brooking Bird Club in the 31 years she was a member. A few minutes before she unexpectedly died she had been speaking to her husband about the talk on Hawaiian birds she expected to give the next evening for that club.

Mrs. Jones was laid to rest on November 17 in Parkview Cemetery in Hastings, a bird sanctuary where she had so often gone to find blue birds, the tufted titmouse, evening grosbeak, the yellow crowned night heron, and some of the rarer kinds of warblers.

GENERAL NOTES

AMERICAN BITTERN EATS SNAKE.—On May 6, 1953 about four miles east of the entrance to the Valentine Waterfowl Refuge on the road leading east to highway 83, the author observed an American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) eat a Plains Garter Snake (*Thamnophis radix*). When first observed, the Bittern was standing by the side of the road in a marshy area intently watching something in the grass. Suddenly the bittern thrust its head and neck forward into the grass with great rapidity. In about two seconds the bittern raised its head, tightly grasping in its bill a snake approximately 24 inches long. The snake was writhing and struggling to get out of the tightly clenched bill when all of a sudden it succeeded in getting the posterior part of its body wrapped around the neck of the bittern. In all the snake was able to get two complete coils around the bittern's neck. After

approximately five minutes of struggle, the bittern succeeded in getting the snake off its neck, but in doing so dropped the snake into the water. Quick as a flash the bittern succeeded in recapturing the snake. This time the snake managed to get one coil around the bittern's bill. However, this was to the latter's advantage, because the tighter the snake coiled around the bill, the tighter the pressure became on the snake. Finally after a violent display of twisting and turning the snake relaxed its hold and hung limply in the bittern's bill. The bittern readily succeeded in swallowing the snake head first. With several great gulps the entire snake disappeared into the bittern. The time for this entire operation took about 15 minutes. While all this was going on, the author was seated in a car about 12 feet away from the scene of operation.

Sprunt and Chamberlain (*South Carolina Bird Life* 1949:96) report that snakes make up about five percent of the bittern's food.—William F. Rapp, Jr., Crete, Nebraska.

NOTES FROM OMAHA.—On Saturday morning, May 23, 1953, Mrs. Fred Buffett and I were watching birds at Camp Brewster on the edge of Fontenelle Forest south of Omaha. A group of high school girls were in the camp at the time. At 10:00 a. m. the bell rang for assembly and all of the girls went into the lodge. It was suddenly very quiet, and almost immediately we noticed numerous small birds coming out of the forest to drink and bathe at a very small pool made by a dripping faucet in a flower bed. Among them were a pair of Black-poll Warblers, one Black-throated Blue Warbler, twenty-five or more Yellow Warblers (bathing two to four at a time), several Goldfinches, three Tennessee Warblers, several Warbling Vireos, one Red-eyed Vireo, a few Bell's Vireos, and two Blue-headed Vireos. One Ruby-throated Hummingbird came and drank from the dripping water while on the wing, then lit on a weed stub nearby. A few larger birds, Catbirds, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and Baltimore Orioles, came, momentarily frightening the small birds away, but we had noticed earlier that the sparrows and larger birds (and some Yellow Warblers) were bathing in a tank at the base of a drinking fountain not too far distant. Just before 11:00 a.m. a male Blue Grosbeak came to the little pool with another grosbeak which appeared to be a cross between a Blue and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Its head was solid bright blue, it had the big pink throat patch of the Rose-breasted, its breast was white (slightly pinkish), and its wings and back were a buffy brownish. The bird was not mottled in coloring; the blue head and pink throat were clear solid colors. We were amazed to see such a beautiful bird, one that we had never seen pictured in any book, and we studied several books before concluding that it was a young male hybrid. All of these birds were seen in bright sunlight against a concrete block background, making for excellent observation. It rained that night and when we returned the following Monday and Tuesday, we saw no birds coming to bathe in the little pool.

Also at Camp Brewster on those days we saw a pair of Scarlet Tanagers, a pair of Summer Tanagers, a Yellow-breasted Chat, Indigo Buntings, Wood Peewee, Crested Flycatcher, Wood Thrush, Olive-backed Thrush, and Red-bellied Woodpecker. We saw other kinds of warblers in the trees but were not positive in identification.—Mrs. H. P. (Florence) Smith, Omaha, Nebraska.

ROADSIDE WATER AND SHORE BIRD CENSUS ON MAY 18, 1953.—While driving from Hastings to Alliance on State Highway 2 we took the following roadside census. We paused at all of the little ponds and lakes adjacent to the road. Black Terns, Franklin's Gulls, Wilson's Phalarope, Blue-winged Teal, Shoveller, Pintail, Mallard, Lesser Scaup, Redhead, Ruddy Duck, Spotted Sandpiper, American Bittern (seven seen, one had a sizeable fish in his beak), Eared Grebe, Killdeer, Black-crowned Night Heron, Pied-billed Grebe, Forster's Tern, Stilt Sandpiper, Avocet (51 seen), Long-billed Curlew, Willet, Upland Plover, Cormorant, Coot, and Snowy Egret. Sometimes we stepped from the car, and it was amazing how undisturbed the birds were. The only bird which showed fear was the Snowy Egret very near the road. It took flight and settled in a nearby lake.—Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Jones, Hastings, Nebraska.

WHOOPIING CRANES AT HASTINGS AND ODESSA.—Junior Briscoe, Kearney State Teachers College student, spotted seven Whooping Cranes in a field south of Johnson's Lake during the week of March 10, 1953. The birds were seen later by C. A. Black of Kearney. On April 16, 1953, Ed Bosak, game warden, reported sighting one Whooping Crane with a flock of Sandhill Cranes 2.5 miles south of Odessa near the Platte River. Mr. W. E. Eigsti saw this same crane on April 22 and secured a movie of it in flight.—Mrs. A. H. Jones, Hastings, Nebraska.

WHOOPIING CRANES AT HASTINGS.—Three Whooping Cranes (*Grus americana*) were seen flying toward the southwest over Hastings on November 10, 1953, at 4:30 p. m. Mr. Tom Kimminau, an employee at a Hastings garage, living on North Kansas Avenue, saw the birds flying at about 800 feet. After talking with Mr. Kimminau, I am convinced that he saw Whooping Cranes. Two other men standing near Mr. Kimminau also saw the cranes. This record was made about two weeks after 35 spot announcements were broadcast from radio station KHAS about protecting the rare cranes, along with data on identification of the birds.—W. E. Eigsti, Hastings, Nebraska.

WHOOPIING CRANE REPORT.—Willard Thiesen of Hastings and Paul Manley of Holdrege, while hunting from their blind on a pond 3 miles south and one-half mile east of Elm Creek, saw four Whooping Cranes. The birds were first seen at 6:30 a. m. and they remained in the same area until 8:00 a. m., when they flew off to the south. They were apparently all in good condition. The men refrained from firing at ducks for fear of startling the cranes.—Mrs. A. H. Jones, Hastings, Nebraska.

FALL MIGRATION DATES AT HASTINGS.—The following observations were recorded by Vera Maunder, Mrs. C. E. Ruch, Mrs. A. E. Olsen, Mrs. A. M. Jones and this reporter. Redstart (Sept. 3), Olive-backed Thrush (Sept. 4, 9, 10), Slate-colored Junco (Sept. 21, 23, 25), Wilson's Warbler (4 seen on Sept. 22), Arctic Towhee (Sept. 27, Oct. 6, 7, 11, 18), Hermit Thrush (Oct. 7), White-throated Sparrow (Oct. 7, 18), Orange-crowned Warbler (Oct. 10), Golden-crowned Kinglets (Oct. 11, 12), Brown Creeper (Oct. 18), Myrtle Warbler (Oct. 19), White-breasted Nuthatch (many times between Sept. 10 and Oct. 20).—Mrs. A. H. Jones, Hastings, Nebraska.

AMERICAN EGRET AT ELMCREEK.—On October 22, 1953, Mr. Guyer, game warden at Lexington, received a call from Elmcreek stating that a Whooping Crane had been sighted in the river just south of Elmcreek. Mr.

Guyer was unable to leave at that time, so I volunteered to make the trip and soon found the bird that had been reported. However, it was not a Whooping Crane but an American Egret. It was smaller than the cranes, lacked completely the black wing tips, and had a large bright yellow bill and very dark legs. I had never seen an American Egret before in this area.—Ray S. Wycoff, Lexington, Nebraska.

AMERICAN EGRETS AT ALEXANDRIA.—This has been an exceptionally good year at the Alexandria Lake and we have observed many species of water birds: White Pelicans, Cormorants, Horned and Eared Grebes, Ruddy Turnstones, Pectoral Sandpipers, Least Terns, Least Bitterns, Red-breasted Mergansers, and Willets. There were hundreds of Wilson's Phalaropes and many Black-crowned Night Herons. Finally, on May 25, 1953, Mrs. Chase and I had the opportunity of watching a pair of American Egrets on a country pond near here. The owner of the pond kindly phoned us about their presence there and we drove out to observe them at length from the car at a distance of about 75 yards. Using both binoculars and a 30-power scope, we could see quite plainly their identifying characteristics. At the same pond somewhat earlier in the spring we had seen three Sandhill Cranes, which remained in the area for several days.—W. J. Chase, Alexandria, Nebraska.

1954 Field Days

All Field Day reports must be sent to the editors on *Nebraska Ornithologists' Union Daily Check List* cards. These cards may be purchased from Miss Mary Lou Hanson, Custodian. All reports not received on check-list cards will be returned. Numbers of individual species should be listed. Reports should reach the editors within seven days after the Field Day.

Spring Field Day — May 1 and 2

Annual Field Day — Valentine, May 22

Fall Field Day — October 2 and 3

The National Audubon Society sponsors the following bird counts: Christmas Bird Count, Winter Bird Count and Breeding Bird Count. The results of these counts are published in *Audubon Field Notes*. Instructions for the making of these counts were published in *Audubon Field Notes*, volume 4, no. 2 (April, 1950), a reprint of which may be obtained for 15 cents from the National Audubon Society, 1000 Fifth Avenue, New York 28, New York.

World Wide bird counts are being conducted by the Bird Research Station, Glanton, Northumberland, England. Those interested in cooperating should contact Mr. Noble Rollin at the above address.

Book Reviews

KNOWING YOUR TREES. G. H. Collingwood and Warren D. Brush. The American Forestry Association, 919 Seventeenth St., N. W., Washington 6, D. C. 1949: 312 pp. \$5.00.

This work describes 150 of the most important trees of North America. Unfortunately, the authors fail to state why the ones they chose are the 150 most important. However, the 150 selected trees are illustrated by actual

photographs of the tree itself, both in winter and summer, its leaves, fruit, bark, and, when significant, its flower. For the most part, these photographs are very good.

The authors do not describe any of the numerous species of willow which are one of the dominant trees along Nebraska streams. This omission will seriously impair the usefulness of this book to Nebraska natural history students.—W. F. R.

PARENTAL CARE AND ITS EVOLUTION IN BIRDS. S. Charles Kendeigh The University of Illinois Press, Urbana, Illinois, 1952: x + 356 pp. \$4.00.

To the student of nesting birds Dr. Kendeigh's monograph will be a valuable aid. The work is divided into several parts with the first describing methods of studying parental care. Many of the ingenious electrical devices used in the nest are described in this section. The second part is devoted to work done by Dr. Kendeigh on the behavior of the House Wren. The remainder of the book reviews all of the work which has been done on parental care. This last section is arranged in systematic fashion, each family being discussed separately.

This book fills a long vacant place on the bookshelf of the serious bird student. The amateur ornithologist will be able to supply much of the information which is lacking in this work.—W. F. R.

BIRDS OF MEXICO. Emmet Reid Blake. The University of Chicago Press, 5750 Ellis Avenue, Chicago 37, Illinois, 1953: xxix + 644 pp. \$6.00.

This book is the first complete guide to the field identification of Mexican birds. More and more bird students are taking trips to Mexico to see tropical and subtropical birdlife. This work is ideally suited to the person who goes to see birds and not to collect them. It is written in simple, direct style and uses non-technical terms so that the novice, as well as the specialist, will be able to identify Mexican birds in their natural habitat.

Over a third of the birds described in this book are illustrated with excellent line drawings by Douglas E. Tibbitts.

For the bird student who wants a single volume reference work on Mexican birds this is the best work published to date.—W. F. R.

ZOOLOGY IN POSTAGE STAMPS. W. Dennis Way and O. D. Standen. Philosophical Library Inc., 15 E. 40 St., New York 16, New York, 1952: vii + 113 pp.

It is a combined product of two recognized authorities in leading hobbies, Ornithology and Philately. Zoologically the subject is divided into the Vertebrates and Invertebrates and sub-divided into Mammals, Birds, Reptiles, Amphibians, Fishes, Arthropods and Molluscs. These groups are sub-divided still further to make possible a grouping of geographically characteristic and eye arresting subjects of general interest. These are described as to appearance, habits and habitat and are aptly tied to philately by a tabulation by country, year and denomination of illustrating stamps. Thirty-two plates very artistically illustrate some of the very attractive specimens. The countries of the world are philatelically indexed as to the materials furnished. The book will particularly appeal to the Tropical Collector.—W. J. Chase.

I DRANK THE ZAMBEZI. Arthur Loveridge. Harper & Bros., New York, 1953. \$4.00.

Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology was the richer by 4,000 specimens of frogs, lizards, snakes, birds, and mammals after a safari made by Mr. Loveridge, its Curator of Reptiles and Amphibians, in 1948, into the mountainous plateaus of Nyasaland in southern Africa. Accompanying him were his wife and her sister, who was the official driver of their four ton truck over the dusty, rough and often dangerous roads.

This book should be of interest to serious scientists, for all specimens collected are carefully described, with their habitats, and given their scientific identifications. Mr. Loveridge's dedication to and pleasure in accurate observation is evident throughout. This attention to detail makes the account move rather slowly for the casual reader, and some of the diary-like observations on the truck and the routine of living could have been omitted with profit.

However, the descriptions of the disappearing African forests are of interest to any one, as are the comments on political and climatic forces which are changing the lives of the natives. Mr. Loveridge has an evident understanding of the African temperament, so that he accepts the inconvenient and sometimes inexplicable failings of carriers, cooks, skimmers, and other "boys" with good humor and patience, and makes the reader see them as individuals with personality.—L. D. Heineman.

A GUIDE TO BIRD FINDING (West of the Mississippi).—Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr. Oxford University Press, 114 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, New York, 1953: xxiv-709 pp. \$6.00.

Much that was said in the review of the Eastern counterpart of this book (*Nebr. Bird Rev.* 20, 1952:48) is applicable to this Western version. Those "bird finders" who expect to travel away from their home hunting grounds will do well to buy, read, and carry this book along on their excursions. This reviewer has compared what he might have done with the aid of this book with what he actually did do on two recent trips, out of the state but within the area covered by the Western "Guide." On one trip he accumulated a mass of local publications and a box full of maps, bought two books and picked up other miscellaneous trivia, all to plan a maximum yield field trip. The trip was very successful, but a trip *virtually identical* to that planned with the aid of much effort and expense could have been made merely by reading the appropriate section in Pettingill's fine book. On the second trip the reviewer was fortunate enough to go on a guided tour led by a generous and expert, local, amateur ornithologist. Again the same trip (this time truly identical for the local expert was a contributor to the Guide) could have been made by reading and following the excellent directions in the Guide. The reviewer's copy of Pettingill's book has travelled through many hands on loan to friends making trips to unfamiliar places, and all those who have used it have praised the clarity and accuracy of the directions and have marveled that so small a book could contain such a wealth of useful information. The early reception of these Guides has been largely very favorable. It will be interesting to observe whether they, like the Peterson *Field Guides*, will become a necessary part of the bird watcher's field equipment.—HEB

BIRDS AS INDIVIDUALS.—Len Howard. Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, New York, 1953: 219 pp. \$4.00.

This is an unusual and in many ways amazing report of bird observations made over a period of years by Miss Howard. It is certainly far different from the usual precise, objective reports on which banded bird did what, when, and possibly why. Much of the book is devoted to as subjective account of the activities and life histories of birds (Great Titmice, Blackbirds, Robins, etc.—English species which may or may not be counterparts of our own) as has yet been written. Miss Howard has done much to give to “her” birds personalities and individualistic traits that many of us are reluctant to attribute to mere birds. Yet her report has an authentic sound and those skeptics who have had the courage to visit Miss Howard’s home have come away convinced of the honesty and accuracy of her reporting. It seems probable that much of Miss Howard’s book will have to be reckoned with in any ultimate analysis of bird behavior. An excellent section on bird songs is further evidence of Miss Howard’s astuteness as an observer.

This book will hold an especial appeal for those readers who have fed birds and who have tried to “tame” the birds that come to their feeders.—HEB

NOTICE!

Please, check the address on the envelope in which this copy of THE NEBRASKA BIRD REVIEW was mailed to you. If this address is incorrect, send your correct mailing address to Dr. Henry E. Baumgarten, Avery Laboratory, University of Nebraska, Lincoln 8, Nebraska. If you know of a member of the N. O. U. who did not receive his copy of the BIRD REVIEW, please tell that member to notify Dr. Baumgarten at the above address. Changes of addresses should be sent to Dr. Baumgarten, who will forward such changes to the Treasurer.